



# News Release

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**DATE:**  
**CONTACT:** Ken August  
or Lea Brooks  
(916) 440-7660

## **ILLEGAL TOBACCO SALES TO MINORS IN CALIFORNIA FALL TO AN ALL-TIME LOW**

***Doughnut Shops and Discount Stores Illegally Sell  
At More Than Double the Statewide Average***

SACRAMENTO — Illegal sales of tobacco to minors in California are now at their lowest level since the state first began monitoring these sales 10 years ago, State Health Director Sandra Shewry announced today. Results of California's 2005 Youth Tobacco Purchase Survey (YTPS) show illegal statewide sales of tobacco to minors at 10.2 percent — down from 14 percent in 2004 and 37 percent in 1995 when the survey was first conducted.

"California's comprehensive tobacco education campaign, as well as local and state tobacco retailer licensing laws, have led to the majority of California retailers upholding the law and not selling tobacco to minors," Shewry said.

Among the total illegal sales, retailers with the highest illegal sales rates in 2005 were deli/meat markets (18.5 percent), doughnut shops (20.6 percent) and discount/gift stores (21.6 percent). Retailers with the lowest rates include pharmacies (2.4 percent), convenience stores that sell gasoline (6.5 percent), tobacco-only stores (7.3 percent) and supermarkets (8.5 percent).

"Tobacco retailers have the responsibility to check identification, verify age and post the state mandated age-of-sale warning signs," Shewry added. "We're asking retailers to be responsible business owners and community members by ensuring their clerks don't sell tobacco to youth."

The California Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement (STAKE) Act requires that tobacco retailers post a STAKE Act warning sign at each point-of-sale stating that selling tobacco to persons under 18 years of age is illegal and subject to penalties. The STAKE Act signs also include the toll-free telephone number (1-800-5 ASK-4-ID) that customers may call to report underage tobacco sales. In addition, the STAKE Act mandates compliance checks of tobacco retailers and imposes fines on retailers who break the law. Last year, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation that broadens the STAKE Act by prohibiting the sale of tobacco related products by self-service display.

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Furthermore, the 2005 survey found that 81.4 percent of stores surveyed posted tobacco industry sponsored age-of-sale warning signs, while only 46.1 percent posted the legally mandated state warning signs. Only STAKE Act signs satisfy state law and cannot be replaced with other signs, such as the tobacco industry's "We Card" program.

According to the California Department of Health Services' 2004 California Student Tobacco Survey, 13.2 percent of high school students in California smoked last year, compared with 16 percent in 2002 and 21.6 in 2000.

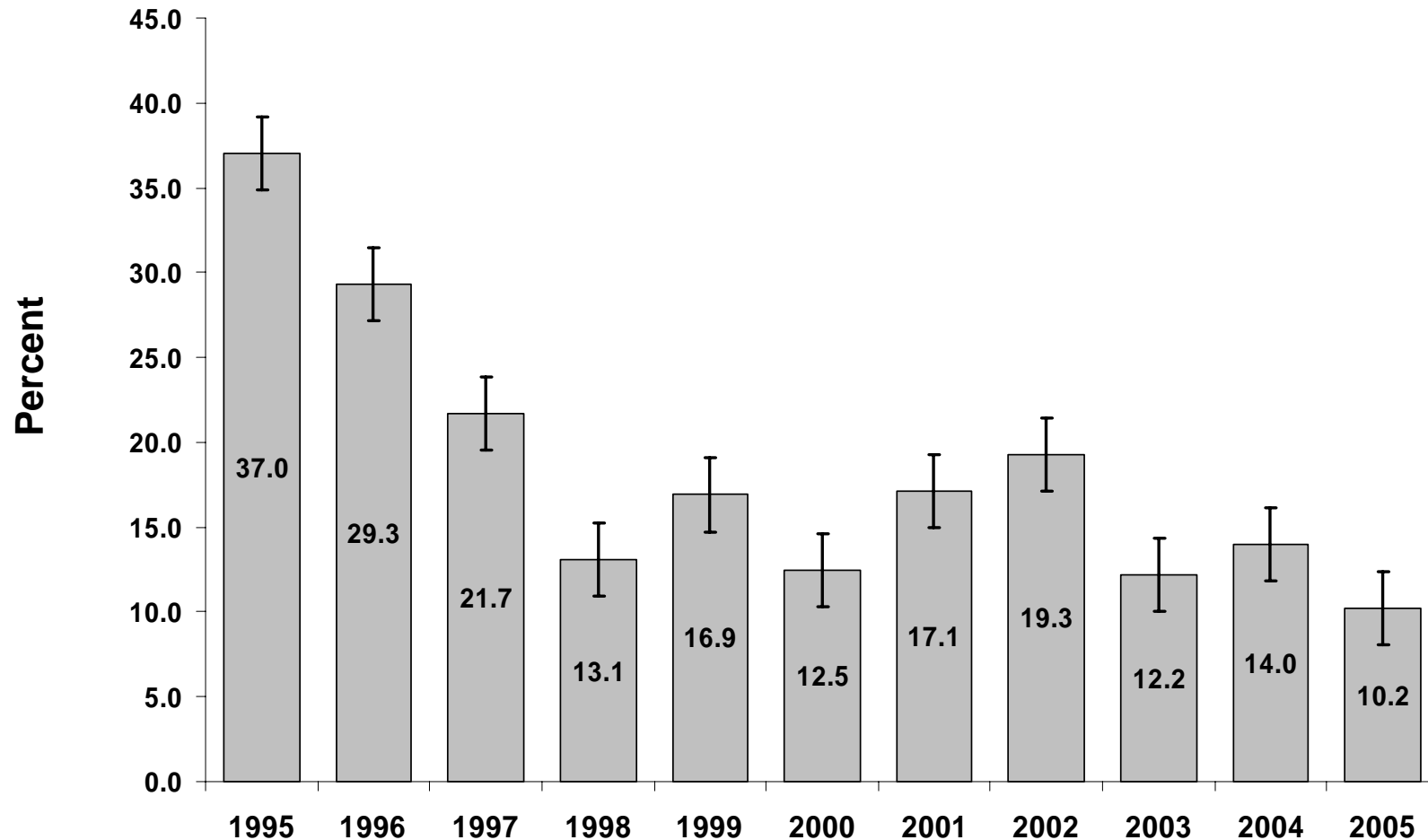
Among middle-school students in grades six through eight, 3.9 percent reported smoking last year, compared with 4.4 percent in 2002 and 6.7 in 2000.

Individuals who witness suspected unlawful sales of tobacco to minors are urged to call the STAKE Act hotline at 1-800-5 ASK-4-ID.

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# Percent of Retailers Selling Tobacco to Youth, 1995-2005



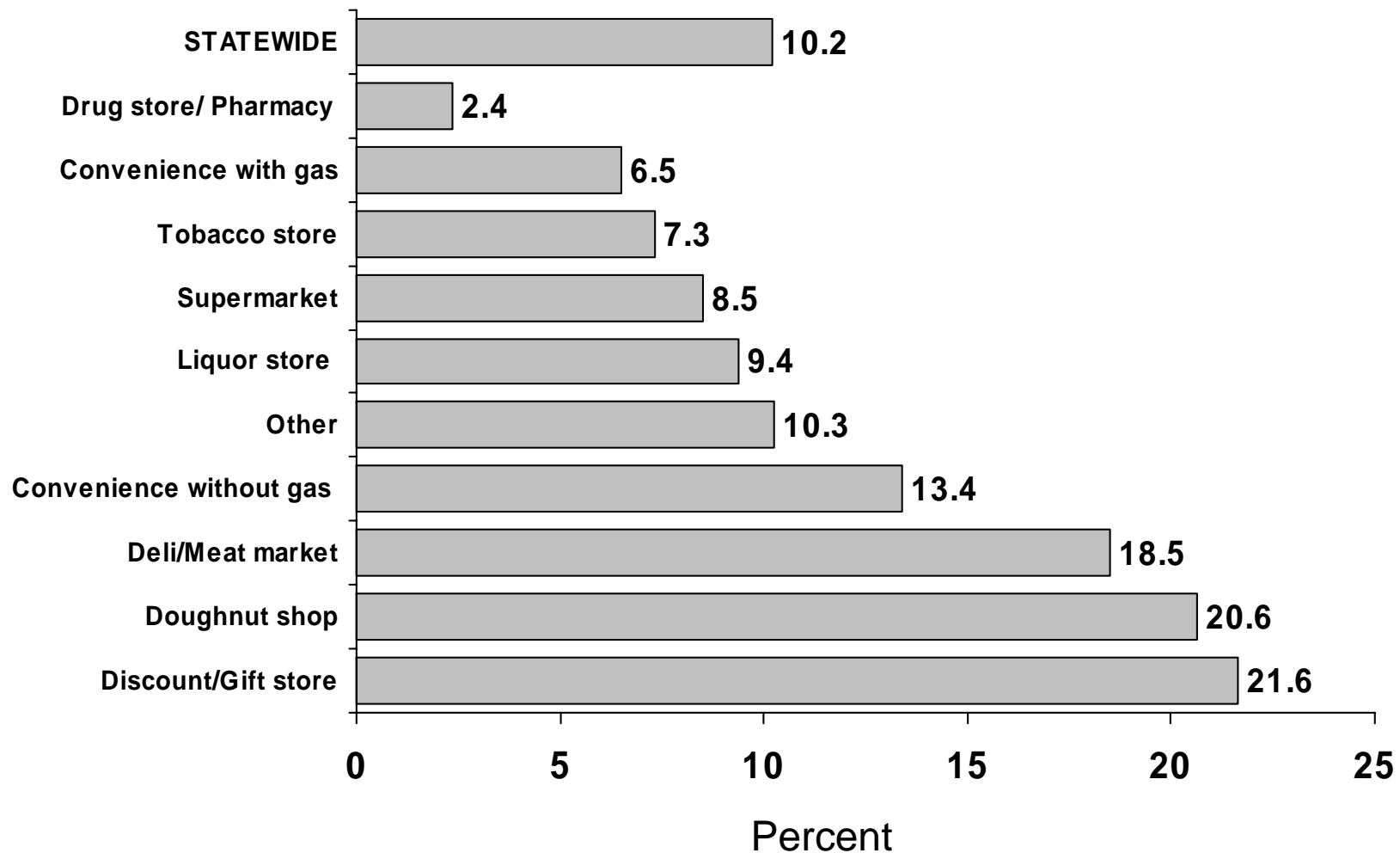
Attempted buy protocol 1995-1996; Actual buy protocol 1997-2005.

Source: Youth Tobacco Purchase Survey, 1995-2005.

Prepared by: California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, July 2005.



## Percent of Retailers Selling Tobacco to Youth by Store Type, 2005



Source: Youth Tobacco Purchase Survey, 2005.

Prepared by: California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, July 2005.

"Other" includes "gas station only," bowling alley and other miscellaneous store types.